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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering

Carbohydrate Research Division

CANDLE MAKING

The Department has no publications on making candles. This subject is discussed in considerable detail in encyclopaedias. The chief materials used in the manufacture of candles are paraffin wax, commercial stearic acid, and beeswax, the latter being used largely for making candles for sacramental purposes. Candles can be colored with the so-called oil-soluble dyes.

Bayberry Candles

Usually bayberries are ripe and ready for picking any time after October 1. As the plants grow slowly, care should be taken not to break the branches when gathering the berries.

To extract bayberry tallow for making Christmas candles in the home, remove the leaves and stems and boil the berries in water for 20 minutes. When cold, lift the solidified wax from the surface of the water. After adjusting the wick in a carefully cleaned mold, fill it with tallow which has been heated to about 135° Fahrenheit. The mold may be placed in a receptacle containing cold water to hasten cooling. Remove the candle from the mold when it has solidified.

Bayberry candles when burning generally give off but very little odor of the characteristic bayberry volatile oil which is found chiefly in the leaves. During the burning of the candle, the very small quantity of volatile oil in it burns, forming water and carbon dioxide which are the products from the combustion of the tallow itself. Sometimes, directly after blowing out a candle, a distinct bayberry odor is noticeable.